



Duxbury's Natural Legacy

The town of Duxbury has a long and proud tradition of land conservation. In the 17th century, Duxbury citizens voted to keep cattle off the outside beach to prevent erosion and limited clam digging to preserve the supply. As early as 1888 the town acquired its first conservation land in the form of 2 acres of marsh along Powder Point Ave. This first conservation work was undertaken by an organization which eventually became known as the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society. This society went on to facilitate purchases and gifts of land to the town of Duxbury, realizing even 100 years ago that the town had a unique and beautiful rural character which needed to be preserved and protected.

The attitude of the citizens of Duxbury has retained much of the same sensitivity to the environment shown by these original citizens. We continue to cherish our town's rural character. We enjoy driving on country roads past quiet fields and wooded hills. We hike on our beautiful conservation land and drink clean water from protected aquifers beneath this land. The results of the Strategic Plan questionnaire tell us that Duxbury residents appreciate their open space and intend to protect and preserve it.

Protection of land in the face of the forces of change in this late 20th century is, however, not always easy. The tradition of land preservation begun in the 18th century was continued with vigor in the 1970's in response to the construction of Route 3 and the resulting development in this town which transformed it rapidly from a rural to a suburban area. Farsighted town planners of that time devised a plan of open space acquisition centered around watersheds. Their intent was to protect water quality, wildlife habitat and aesthetic values. The land owned by Camp Wing was included as part of this original plan that created green belts throughout the town. In 1970, Town Meeting voted \$700,000 to purchase land for preservation. Land acquisition occurred through the 70's.

Now, 20 years later, we face a potential quantum leap in the development of this town. In the past 2 decades land preservation virtually stopped while development continued at a rapid pace. If every lot currently buildable is indeed developed, the population of Duxbury could conceivably double, radically altering the appearance of the town as well as putting a large

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fiscal strain on the tax paying population. The train from Boston and a planned widening of Route 3 will increase pressures to accelerate house building. Available land for development is becoming increasingly marginal. The Conservation Commission nowadays spends much of its limited time determining the buildability of these valuable marginal parcels along rivers and coasts, near wetlands and bogs.

Balancing development with conservation is not a simple task. Our town will inevitably grow. It is up to the people of this town to decide how Duxbury will grow. We have all traveled to old familiar places only to find them altered almost beyond recognition. We do not want that to happen here. Duxbury's town planners have, over the past centuries and decades, left us a legacy of which we can be proud. They clearly appreciated the natural beauty and precious resources of this place. This May the town will be presented with an exciting opportunity to continue its commitment to conservation by purchasing 4 important parcels of land. It is now up to us to demonstrate the wisdom and careful management of our forbearers, to save this unique and wonderful place for generations to come.

If you would like to help in any way with Friends of Conservation, write PO Box 1528 or call Dot Baker at 934-2302 or Kay Foster at 934-2663.